

## Carry On In Knoydart

A Sequel to Carry On Up the Khyber and Carry On Up the Kingie<sup>1</sup>

*Gordon Stalker*

Cairngorm Club Overnight Meets being now definitely a thing of the past, I resolved to have my own Mid-Summer Meet, and, encouraged by my recent completion of the Munros in Knoydart, I wanted to see more of this wonderfully remote area.

My 1963 AA Gazetteer<sup>2</sup> describes Lochan nam Breac as 'picturesque and rock girt', and I decided to make this the object of my visit. Saturday 19th June 2004 saw me sitting in my car at the point where the public road to Kinloch Hourn diverges from Loch Quoich, watching the rain teeming down and a temperature of 7°C on my car thermometer. I therefore spent the night in my car and set out the next day laden with tent and camping gear.

After a nightmarish initial stretch over the Sron Lice na Fearna, and crossing the Abhainn Chosaidh (apparently difficult in spate), I was greeted by a motorway-standard track on which I could easily have driven my car. This can only have been constructed in connection with the dam at the west end of Loch Quoich, and the rest of it linking the public road must now lie under the loch. I was particularly impressed with the fine curved stone bridges.

I eventually arrived at the dual dam which now forms the west end of Loch Quoich. No sign of Kinloch Quoich – presumably now under the waters of the loch. A short walk brought me to the shores of Lochan nam Breac, which surpassed my expectations. I pitched my tent beside a fine sandy beach with fine views of Luinne Bheinn and after a meal noticed I was at the foot of Ben Aden, a very remote Corbett. I thought I had better climb it, which I did via Allt Coire na Cruache, descending by the difficult NE ridge. A naked swim in Lochan nam Breac from the beach completed my midsummer's night.

The following day, I continued my walk along the north shore of Lochan nam Breac, passing an atmospherically ruined shieling with a grave before tackling the Mam Unndalain and descending to Barrisdale, where part of the MBA bothy was being converted to self-catering accommodation.

On the back of a dire weather forecast, I decided not to press on to Inverie, and returned to Kinloch Hourn via the magnificent path along the south shore of Loch Hourn. While resting under the Caledonian pines on the path, I was surprised by a splash in the water and was delighted to see an otter at close quarters coming ashore to eat a crab. Somewhat tired, I reached Kinloch Hourn and called in at the farmhouse where I sampled the tea and cake of the new custodian. My problem then was that my car lay



*Luinne Beinn from Lochan nam Breac*

six km up a steep road on a hot day, so I weakened and took a lift on the Post Bus.

After this successful and enjoyable trip, cut short due to a bad weather forecast, I returned in August to the west end of Loch Arkaig and walked in to Sourlies bothy, which I found most comfortable, occupying the bunk by the fire. The following day, I struggled over the Mam Meadail to Inverie where I camped beside Long Beach (not California) for a couple of nights, enjoying swimming from this fine beach. The only blot on the horizon is that a new pier is being constructed at Inverie as part of the same scheme which has seen Rum, Eigg and Muck provided with new piers. Soon you will be able to take your car on the 'road to nowhere'! I then walked out via Sourlies to find myself in the deluge which caused the well reported rock-fall and road blockage in Glen Ogle. Wet does not begin to describe it – watercourses I had not noticed on the way in were now raging thigh-deep torrents! Thankfully, I reached my car at Strathan to be devoured by midges as I struggled out of wet clothes.

So much for Knoydart – heaven and hell all in one!

### *References*

1. Carry on up the Khyber, *Cairngorm Club Journal*, Volume 21; Number 106, 2001, p. 40, and Carry on up the Kingie, *Cairngorm Club Journal*, Volume 21, Number 107, 2004, p. 115.
2. *Illustrated Road Book of Scotland*, The Automobile Association, 1963.